



CONSULATE GENERAL OF THE UNITED STATES
JERUSALEM

U.S. DEPARTMENT of STATE

WEEKLY MAILING

August 3, 2012

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Official Websites:

<http://jerusalem.usconsulate.gov>

<http://arabic.jerusalem.usconsulate.gov>

<http://gaza.usvpp.gov>

<http://arabic.gaza.usvpp.gov>

Social Media:

www.facebook.com/UsConGenJerusalem

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Thank You!

Michael Ratney, Consul General in Jerusalem



Michael Ratney became U.S. Consul General in Jerusalem on July 29, 2012.

Prior to assuming his duties in Jerusalem, Mr. Ratney was Deputy Assistant Secretary for International Media, leading efforts in the Bureau of Public Affairs focused on foreign communications and media engagement. From 2010 to 2011, he established and served as the first Director of the Office of International Media Engagement, where he managed State Department initiatives to ensure accurate and positive coverage of U.S. policy by foreign media. In this capacity, Mr. Ratney oversaw the State Department's six Media Hubs in London, Brussels, Dubai, Johannesburg, Tokyo, and Miami.

From 2009 to 2010, Mr. Ratney served as Spokesman for the State Department's Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs.

Prior to returning to Washington in 2009, Mr. Ratney served from 2006 to 2009 as Deputy Chief of Mission at the American Embassy in Doha, Qatar. Mr. Ratney was the Deputy Economic Counselor at the American Embassy in Mexico City from 2003 to 2006. In 2004, he served in Iraq, first as a Political Advisor for the Coalition Provisional Authority in Baghdad, and then as the first Regional Coordinator at the Regional Embassy Office in Basrah.

Mr. Ratney has a BS in Mass Communication from Boston University (1983) and an MA in International Affairs from the George Washington University (1989). His languages are Arabic, French, and Spanish.

Mr. Ratney is a member of the Senior Foreign Service. He is married to Karen Sasahara, also a Foreign Service Officer.

Consul General Ratney's Remarks at an Iftar Held at the Children's Happiness Center (CHC) in Hebron



Kol a'm wa antom bikhair! Thank you joining us here tonight. It is an honor to celebrate Ramadan with you.

I would like to thank the head of the Children's Happiness Center, Mr. Mahmoud Asbeah, for his generosity in hosting us in this venue tonight, and to Mayor Khaled Osaily for his warm welcome. CHC is an organization doing great work and is a great partner of the U.S. government, and I thank the participants, families, staff, volunteers, and the municipality of Hebron for their efforts. And to the folks coming from the Old City of Hebron, thank you for being here as well.

It was a pleasure to share this great iftar meal with you.

I only recently began my job as the American Consul General, and in fact, this is my first time to Hebron, this historic city I've heard so much about. It is a privilege to arrive during the holy month of Ramadan.

On behalf of the people of the United States, I want you to know how proud we are of the close bonds we have with the Palestinian people and with Muslims around the world. Tonight and throughout the month, we are honored to celebrate this Holy Month with you and also to celebrate our peoples' longstanding friendship.

Thank you again for celebrating with me tonight. I look forward to my time here as the American Consul General, and to visiting Hebron many times. Ramadan Kareem.

International Religious Freedom Report for 2011

Executive Summary

Religious freedom in various parts of the Occupied Territories falls under the jurisdiction of the Palestinian Authority (PA), Israel, or Hamas (in the Gaza Strip). The laws and policies of the PA and Israel protect religious freedom, and in practice the two governments generally respected these rights. Neither the PA nor Israel demonstrated a trend toward improvement or deterioration in respect for and protection of the right to religious freedom. The “de facto” Hamas authorities in Gaza restricted religious freedom, and the regime’s level of respect for religious freedom in law and in practice remained problematic during the year.

The PA does not have a constitution, but the Palestinian Basic Law generally functions as a temporary constitution. The basic law provides for freedom of belief, worship, and the performance of religious rites, unless such practices violate public order or morality. PA policy protected the generally free practice of religion, although problems persisted during the year. The basic law states that Islam is the official religion and the principles of Sharia (Islamic law) shall be the main source of legislation. The basic law also proscribes discrimination based on religion and stipulates that all citizens are equal before the law and that basic human rights are liberties that shall be protected.

Israel exercises varying degrees of legal, military, and economic control in the Occupied Territories. Israel’s Basic Law on Human Dignity and Liberty provides for the protection of religious freedom. The Israeli government respected the right to freedom of religion within the Occupied Territories during the year, although the government’s closure policies and the separation barrier restricted the ability of Palestinian Muslims and Christians to reach some places of worship and to practice their religious rites, particularly in Jerusalem. Israeli security authorities at times restricted Muslim and Christian worship within Jerusalem. Israeli policies also limited the ability of Israeli Jews to reach places of worship in areas under Palestinian control.

Since the 2007 Hamas coup in the Gaza Strip, Hamas, a U.S.-designated foreign terrorist organization, has exercised de facto authority over the territory and has enforced conservative Islamic law, harassed non-Muslims, and imposed religious restrictions on women.

There were reports of societal abuses and discrimination based on religious affiliation, belief, or practice. Christians and Muslims generally enjoyed good relations during the year in the Occupied Territories and in Jerusalem. However, societal tensions remained high among Jewish communities, and between Jews and non-Jews; continuing violence heightened those tensions.

U.S. consulate general officials in Jerusalem monitor religious persecution and discrimination, and raise instances of alleged abuses or discriminatory practices with the relevant government officials at all levels, as well as with religious and human rights groups.

[كلمة الوزيرة كلينتون بمناسبة إطلاق تقرير الحرية الدينية الدولي لعام 2011](#)

[Secretary Clinton on 2011 International Religious Freedom Report](#)

Development Diplomacy: Modernizing U.S. Diplomacy To Better Support Development

“We need to continue shifting our approach and our thinking from aid to investment, investments targeted to produce tangible returns...but we also have to expect more from developing countries. The political will must be mobilized to take on the biggest obstacles to a country’s own development.”

– Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton

The last two decades have transformed our understanding of what it takes to achieve development. The surest path to creating more prosperous societies requires indigenous political will; responsive, effective, accountable, and transparent governance; and broad-based, inclusive economic growth.

Without this enabling environment, sustained development progress often remains out of reach. But development, which along with diplomacy and defense is essential to America’s national security, requires an updated engagement model. Traditional development approaches need to be broadened to produce a strategy of influence, engagement, and reform mobilization.

Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton is placing development at the center of U.S. diplomacy. We are working to realize this vision through three broad areas:

- **Prioritizing Partner Country Reform**
- **Strengthening and Using All of the Tools at Our Disposal**
- **Investing in Our People**

Read more [here](#).

The U.S. Consulate General in Jerusalem Announces The 2013-2014 Humphrey Program

The Hubert H. Humphrey Fellowship Program is a Fulbright program that brings accomplished young and mid-career professionals with demonstrated leadership potential to the United States for a year of non-degree graduate-level study, leadership development, and professional enrichment. Fellows come from countries in various stages of development or transition. By providing future leaders and policy makers with experience in U.S. society, culture, and professional fields, the program provides a basis for lasting, productive ties between Americans and their professional counterparts overseas. The 2013-2014 Recruitment Guidelines, which may be downloaded from <http://posts.humphreyfellowship.org>

Jerusalem and West Bank Applicants: Email CV to Exchanges@state.gov and copy SirianiMY@state.gov; call 02-622-7107 for more information

Gaza Applicants: Email CV to Essam Mattar (emattar@palnet.com); call 08-286-4623 or 059-967-7317 for more information.

Application Deadline and inquiries:

Please submit application to <http://posts.humphreyfellowship.org/> and send us a copy of your CV by **September 21, 2012.**

Reagan-Fascell Democracy Fellows

Reagan-Fascell Democracy Fellows maintain full-time residence at the [International Forum for Democratic Studies](#), NED's research arm located in Washington, D.C. Dedicated to international exchange, the program offers a collegial environment for fellows to reflect on their experiences and consider lessons learned; conduct research and writing; develop contacts and exchange ideas with counterparts in Washington, D.C.; and build ties that contribute to the development of a global network of democracy advocates.

The Reagan-Fascell program will host two five-month fellowship sessions in 2013–2014: Fall 2013 Session: October 1, 2013 to February 28, 2014
Spring 2014 Session: March 1 to July 31, 2014

For information about the application process, please **read through each of the sections** listed in the **Table of Contents on the right**, paying **particular attention** to the sections under [About Us](#) and [Submitting Your Application](#).

Once you have familiarized yourself with this information, you may proceed to our [Online Application System](#), where you will be asked to register and set up a profile in order to begin your fellowship application.

International and Regional News

[U.S. Sanctions on Iran](#)

[بانيتا يقدم وجهة نظر إيجابية حول اجتماعات القاهرة](#)

[Additional \\$12 Million in Assistance to Syria](#)

[وزير الدفاع بانيتا: جميع الأديان تساهم في جعل الولايات المتحدة قوية](#)

[Panetta Offers Positive Outlook on Cairo Meetings](#)

[كلينتون تهيب بالمجتمع الدولي الدعوة للتسامح الديني في العالم](#)

[All Faiths Contribute to U.S. Strength, Panetta Says](#)

[بيان حقائق من البيت الأبيض حول العقوبات الإضافية على إيران](#)

[White House Fact Sheet on Additional Iran Sanctions](#)

[بيان الرئيس أوباما عن فرض عقوبات إضافية على إيران](#)

[Obama on Additional Sanctions Related to Iran](#)

[كلمة الوزيرة كلينتون بمناسبة إطلاق تقرير الحرية الدينية الدولي لعام 2011](#)

[Obama's Call with Turkish Prime Minister Erdogan on Syria](#)

[فحوى مكالمة أوباما مع رئيس الوزراء التركي أردوغان حول سوريا](#)

[Panetta Sees Closer U.S. Security Partnership with Tunisia](#)

[الملخص التنفيذي لتقرير الحرية الدينية الدولي لعام 2011 لوزارة الخارجية](#)

[بانيتا يتطلع إلى إقامة شراكة أمنية أميركية أوثق مع تونس](#)